



DGS EMPLOYEES OF THE WEEK: Tammy Vehstedt and Latonya Dukes

Recruiting seems so simple in those famous posters of Uncle Sam. You know the ones where he's pointing his finger toward you, accompanied by the words, "I want you for the U.S. Army." Well, recruiting for DGS is a little more complicated. Just ask our DGS Employees of the Week, Tammy Vehstedt and Latonya Dukes who are *Doing Great Service* as DGS' recruitment team. Since September, they have reviewed 2,051 applications and filled 21 positions. And that's only merit system PINS - it does not include Management Service appointments, contractual hiring, or special appointments, many of which they are involved in as well.



Latonya Dukes and Tammy Vehstedt

"With an improving economy and an uptick in retirements, the turnover at DGS has been consistently increasing in recent months," said Personnel Director Janet Cora. "Tammy and Latonya, have done an outstanding job keeping up with it all and doing their best to provide applicant lists to our hiring managers to fill vacancies; all the while maintaining the integrity of our Civil Service employment system and ensuring compliance with State and Federal employment laws."

About 18 months ago, the State introduced a new online job application system, which greatly increased the pool of applicants for a specific job. Where DGS used to get 40 applicants for a position, it now gets about 400. Tammy and Latonya say it can take up to 3 months, while working with a hiring manager, to fill a job opening. They say they take the time to do it right, so that they get the right person for the job. They realize that each new employee is a major investment of taxpayer dollars.

For Tammy, working at DGS is all in the family. Her mom Fran just retired last April after more than 40 years here. Tammy says that as a kid, she used to come to work with her mom and help her file. Volunteering led to a full-time job at DGS in 1999.

Back in 1997, Latonya and Janet's paths first crossed. At the time, Janet was head of recruitment and testing at the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and hired Latonya to assist with the newly decentralized recruitment and testing functions. Fast forward to September of last year and Janet hired her again, this time as a human resources recruiter. Latonya has been with the State for 28 years.

Latonya and Tammy agree that making a job offer is the best part of their jobs. Latonya says it's a very emotional experience when you know that you've genuinely made someone's day. She says it's particularly rewarding when the new hire has been out of work for a while.

When she's not at the office, you might find Latonya trying out new restaurants, particularly ones featuring spicy dishes, or you might find her listening to live music or bowling. Mainly, Latonya says she likes to have fun and try new things. She has two adult children and a grandson who also keep her busy.

Tammy also enjoys bowling and used to be in a league. She and her family like to waterski and vacation every summer at Deep Creek Lake. Her son is 15 and her daughter is 18. Both have volunteered here at DGS like she did.

DGS would like to thank Tammy Vehstedt and Latonya Dukes for their hard work and constancy, and for ***Doing Great Service!***